

# Call 811 Before You Dig!

Today, more and more of the utility companies that supply your home with power, heat, water, telephone, sewer, gas and cable television service are delivering those services underground. It is also possible that these buried service lines are close to the surface, making digging a dangerous endeavor. Fortunately, you can find out where utility owned lines are buried on your property by making a toll-free call to North Carolina 811 by dialing 811 . When you make that call, we will notify our member utility companies of your excavation needs and they will locate their buried utility lines, free of charge.



## Making the Call

During your call, you will be asked a series of questions designed to help pinpoint the location of your project. At the conclusion of your call, you will be given a ticket number and a verbal list of utility companies that are notified by North Carolina 811. This does not mean each member listed owns buried utilities on your property or that every utility company is a member with North Carolina 811. You will want to write down the names of the utility companies for easy reference.

## Color Codes

For marking underground utility lines



**Red**  
Electric



**Orange**  
Communication / CATV



**Yellow**  
Gas / Oil/ Steam



**Green**  
Sewer



**Blue**  
Water



**Pink**  
Temporary Survey Markings



**Purple**  
Irrigation & Slurry Lines



**White**  
Proposed Excavation

North Carolina 811, Inc.  
2300 W. Meadowview Rd., Suite 227  
Greensboro, NC 27407  
[www.nc811.org](http://www.nc811.org)

## Wait the Required Time



North Carolina law requires a three working days notice be given to the utility owners before your digging begins. Once all underground facilities have been marked, you may begin your excavation activities.

It may be quite surprising, but damage to buried utility lines can occur when doing typical home improvement projects such as putting up a fence, mailbox post, swing set or clothesline pole, building a deck or room addition, planting a garden, trees, and shrubbery. If you are beginning a home improvement project that requires digging or adjusting the grade of your property, please contact North Carolina 811 before digging.



# Protect What Really Matters

A Homeowner's Guide to Safe Digging





from the

The North Carolina Utilities Coordinating Committee &

**North Carolina 811**  
[www.nc811.org](http://www.nc811.org)

Continuing Education for Pipes Plus Supported by APWA

[northcarolina.apwa.net](http://northcarolina.apwa.net) [www.ncpipesplus.org](http://www.ncpipesplus.org)



## Respect the marks!



Before digging, be sure that all utilities have responded to your locate request. The North Carolina 811 representative will advise you during your call of the member utility owners we notify for you. The underground facilities located on your property will be identified by color coded paint, stakes or flags. It is the responsibility of the caller to contact a utility locating company to have any private lines located. Once the underground facilities have been located it is very important that the stakes, flags or paint not be disturbed. You may want to explain to young children that the brightly colored flags are not toys and should not be removed from the ground.



## What do I do if I damage an underground facility?

The underground facility can be damaged by any piece of equipment used for digging. Something as simple as a shovel can gouge, scrape, dent, or crease the casing that surrounds a buried utility line. While this type of damage usually does not cause immediate harm, it may lead to a future break or leak as the protective coating erodes. If this should happen to you, do not cover up the line with dirt. Stop digging! Then, contact the utility owner so they can repair the damage. A quick response could prevent future service interruptions and personal injury. If the damage creates a situation that threatens life or property, call 911 immediately.

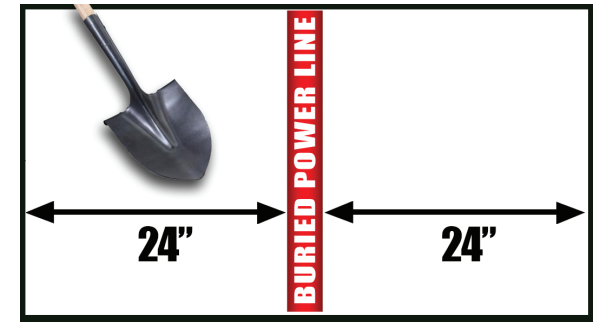


## What happens if I do not call before I dig?

If you do not find out where it is safe to dig in your yard, it is quite possible that you will find a buried utility service and potentially create a life threatening situation.



- Damaging a telephone or fiber optic line may not only cause you inconvenience by the loss of your telephone, cable TV or Internet service, but could deprive the neighborhood of emergency assistance. This would make it impossible for law enforcement and emergency personnel to get the information they need to keep you and your community safe.
- Damaging gas lines could result in serious burn injuries and escaping gas could result in a community evacuation.
- Damaging an electrical line could cause major burns or electrocution.



## Tolerance Zone

The tolerance zone is a buffer on either side of a marked utility line. The state of North Carolina requires a clearance of 24 inches on each side of the marked utility. Within this tolerance zone, if digging must occur, please use extreme caution and dig with a hand shovel.

## A note to homeowners

According to the North Carolina Underground Utility Safety and Damage Prevention Act, homeowners are exempt from notifying utilities unless excavating in utility easement or right-of-way. The most important questions you can ask yourself before exercising your right to this exemption are:

*Do you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt...*

1. *Where all of the utility easements are located on your property?*
2. *If a right-of-way with buried utility lines runs on your property?*